SUSTAINABLE U.S. SEAFOOD:
A JOURNEY FROM SEA TO MARKET

Go on a journey with NOAA Fisheries Service in this five-part series to learn about the complex process and the people involved in getting safe and sustainable seafood to your dinner plate.

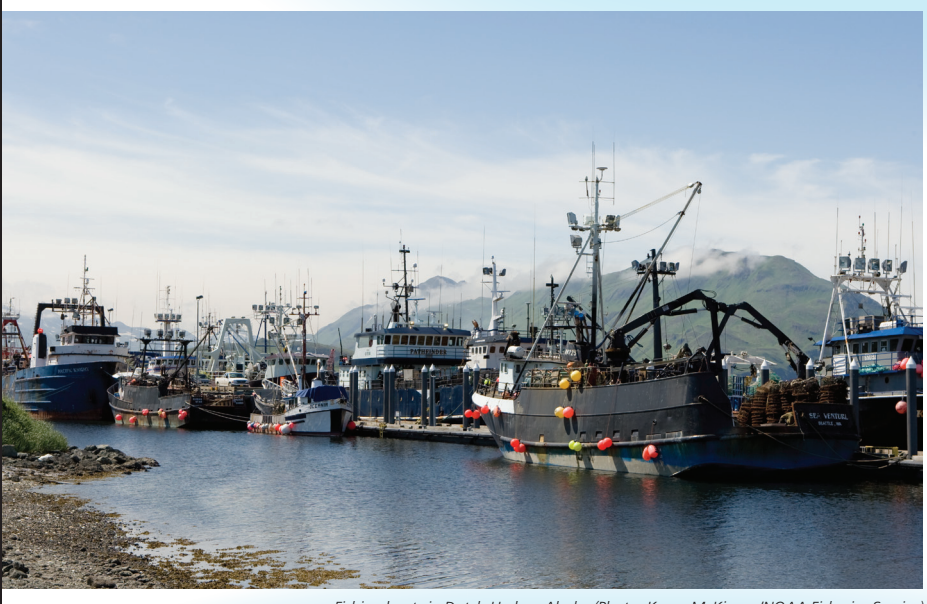
What's the big deal about U.S. seafood?

We love to eat it. The U.S. is the third largest consumer of seafood in the world. Americans consume 15.8 pounds of seafood per person per year. And it's healthy!

It's healthy for the economy, too. Commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries contribute significantly to the local and national economy. In 2010 commercial landings by U.S. fishermen at ports in the 50 states were valued at $4.5 billion. The U.S. is the second largest importer of seafood in the world (valued at over $13 billion) and the fifth largest exporter of seafood in the world (valued at over $4 billion). The seafood industry provides employment opportunities for many people, too. Do you know anyone who has a job because of seafood?

RUBY ROCKFISH—OUR SPOKESFISH

Hi! I'm **Ruby Rockfish.** My scientific name is *Sebastes rubberimus,* but I'm commonly known as yelloweye rockfish. I can be found from California to Alaska. Did you know that yelloweye rockfish can live to over 100 years old?



Fishing boats in Dutch Harbor, Alaska (Photo: Karna McKinney/NOAA Fisheries Service)

From the Pacific Ocean to your plate

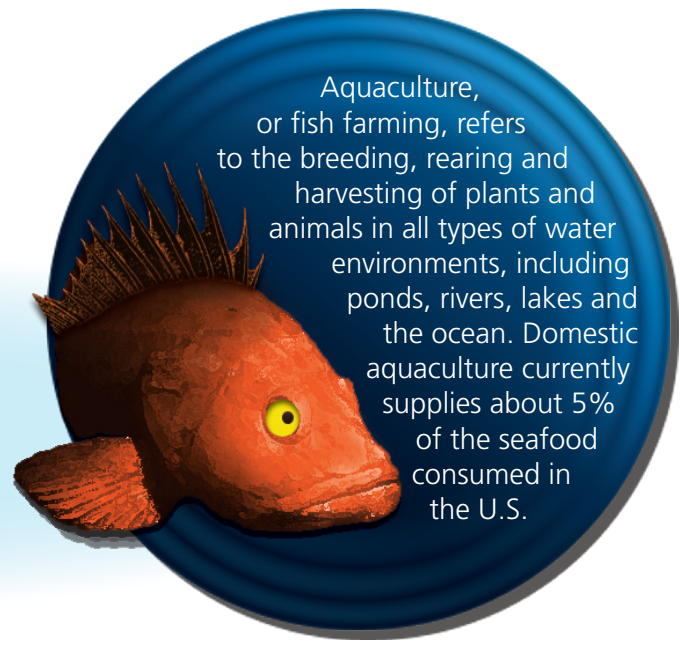
It may seem as simple as putting a hook in the water and catching a fish, but harvesting seafood sustainably—catching enough for today without damaging future harvests—is a complex process. Thousands of people work hard to ensure that the seafood in your market is safe to eat and that there will be plenty for future generations. The trip from sea to market involves fishermen, scientists, managers, lawmakers, policy makers and safety inspectors. Many of these workers are from the federal agency in charge of managing our nation's marine resources—the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service). For the rest of this week you will journey into the science behind sustainable fishery management, how that science is used, and how seafood inspectors make sure seafood is safe. At the end of the week you will get to know a few of the people responsible for ensuring that U.S. seafood is safe and sustainable.

Science: What is a healthy fish population?

A fishery scientist's job is to research what influences the health of fish populations. A fishery scientist investigates how many fish there are, what they eat, what eats them, where they live, how old they are, when they reproduce and how they are affected by changes in their environment. Scientists also need to collect data about the fishery, such as number of fishermen and pounds of fish caught. This information is compiled and analyzed in a document called a stock assessment. Managers use stock assessments to determine how many fish can be sustainably harvested from a population. Learn more tomorrow in part 2.

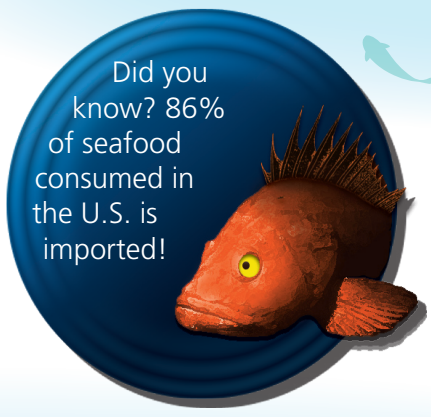
Management, Policy, and Law: How many fish can be caught?

Conserving our natural resources, whether on land or at sea, is something we are all concerned about. For this reason, laws were created that ensure these resources are available for future generations. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) is the principle law governing U.S. marine fisheries. The MSA mandates that NOAA Fisheries limit the amount of fish harvested to prevent or end overfishing. On the West Coast and in Alaska, NOAA Fisheries works with fishery management councils to develop and implement fishery management plans. The council process involves input from many groups, including scientists, fishermen and managers, to ensure that our nation's fishery resources remain available for future generations. Learn more on Tuesday in part 3.



Inspection: Is the seafood safe to eat?

We have a vast array of fish, shellfish, and fishery products that we may choose to eat. Seafood is most often cooked, but some people consume raw seafood, too. Fish may be caught in the wild or raised on farms. Seafood may be available locally, but is often imported from other countries. Many state and federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Department of Commerce) work together to ensure that our seafood, whether domestic or imported, is safe to eat. Learn more on Wednesday in part 4.



The Market: Seafood on our plates

It takes a lot of people to get seafood from the ocean to your plate. Think about all the different species of seafood: there are fish like halibut and salmon, and there are shellfish like Dungeness crab or oysters. Also think about the different ways seafood is processed before getting to the market. It may be packaged fresh, frozen, whole, filleted, smoked, pickled, canned or processed into frozen meals. However you like your seafood, increasing your knowledge about how U.S. seafood is managed sustainably and how imported seafood is inspected for safety will help you ask the right questions and make the best decisions when at the market or restaurant. Learn more on Thursday in part 5.

Fresh seafood at Pike Place Market in dowtown Seattle, Wash. (Photo: Jim Walton)

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Learn more about sustainable seafood and find classroom activities here: **afsc.noaa.gov/education.** Visit NOAA at **noaa.gov** or e-mail NOAA at **afsc.outreach@noaa.gov**. To register for NIE, email **nie@seattletimes.com**.

Seafood is healthy!

Get yummy recipes and learn more about U.S. seafood at **fishwatch.gov**

FishWatch U.S. Seafood Facts

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